

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 1872.

Subject: The Realm of Restfulness.

# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

## HENRY WARD BEECHER.



New-York:

J. B. FORD & CO., No. 27 PARK PLACE,

1872.

AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY, AGENTS FOR THE TRADE.  
European Agents, SAMPSON LOW, SON, & MARSTON, Crown Buildings, 188 Fleet Street, London.  
Sold by all Carriers and News Dealers.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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## THE REALM OF RESTFULNESS.

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"For he endured as seeing him who is invisible."—HEB. XI., 27.

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He is speaking of Moses.

There is something in looking back at these primitive saints that must needs attract every imagination. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—those names beloved to the Jews—are venerable to us. Although they were in an utterly different state of civilization, and surrounded by circumstances entirely different from ours, we can perceive that no mean measure was laid upon them in creation. They were great natures. Yet they were not so very fruitful. Moses left effects behind, more than all the others. They were in some sense pictures; but he was a veritable historic cause. Standing at the beginning, he was one of those few grand natures from whom the history of civilization has flowed.

The facts of his history are of great and dramatic interest. Born of Hebrew parents, adopted by the royal family in Egypt, bred for a king's son or child, and reared, all unknown, by his teachers, that he might destroy the power of the Egyptians, he grew to man's estate. And all the luxury of that court, and its pride and circumstance, could not destroy in him the love for his own people. We hardly know whence the culture came. It was there. The earliest opportunities he improved, though prematurely, in attempting to work in their behalf, and for their deliverance; failing, he fled and dwelt in the wilderness. He was forty years old when he made his first essay. He then went into the pastoral life, and wandered up and down in the land for forty or more years. When other men were ready to die, he was just ready to begin to live. At eighty, he assumed the burden of that great flock, and convoyed them, under great, wonderful, miraculous interpositions of Providence, from their bondage, across the sea, into the school of the desert; and for forty more years he was their leader, and legislator, and supreme executor. He organized his people anew. He framed their constitution for them.

Sloughing much, he incorporated many old customs in the framework of the civil and religious government which he made for them. And we are ourselves beneficiaries of this great man. Many of the most beneficent and prominent features of our civic commonwealth we have derived from the original commonwealth of the desert.

When he was a hundred and twenty years old, he died; and as if romance, that began with him, was to go with him to the very end, he was not permitted to lead his people across the Jordan and into the promised land, but from the tops of the mountains of Moab, where he went up, he discerned that land afar off—its hills, its valleys, its green and fruitful glades. There he died, and was buried; and no man ever knew the place of his burial.

Such a life as this, under such tremendous tasks and responsibilities, so nobly carried out, must be memorable. Though the fragments are few, and the range is not wide, yet no person can look into the life and times of Moses without being profoundly impressed with his great wisdom and executive power. He was a genius in every direction—judicial, legislative, and executive. His name stands, and is worthy to stand, far back in history, as one of the most noble of the names which are preserved to us.

It is declared here that he accomplished all his great work, sustained by his sense of the Invisible.

“He endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

This is a kind of insight given to us, of that which impelled him.

Men like to know how great artists work. Men would like to know what it was that inspired Michael Angelo. Men would like to go into the studios of great painters, and hear them talk, and see what they think about, how they work, and what secrets they have, if any. We love to hear of the interior life and history of great generals, of great statesmen, of great men of every kind. And here is a sort of an inside view given of this great statesman. We see how it was that he kept himself up under his tremendous responsibilities. We see what it was that he took for his rest. Under his cares, and vexations, and annoyances, and discouragements—enough of them to have worn out a score of ordinary men—he maintained himself to the very last; and this is the way in which he did it:

“He endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

This was his vacation. This was his play-ground. This was his refreshment method. He endured his mighty task by divine reverie—by a holy exercise of the imagination. He kept hold of things on the earth, consequently, by letting go of them, and flying into

the great realm above. It was by commerce and familiarity with that great realm where imagination, which, when it is religious, is called *faith*, has its flying ground. And so we see what it was that helped Moses

There is this tendency in man, and there has been from the earliest times. They who derive men from the race below, have, it seems to me, their hardest task to show what is the derivation from anything below us of the principles of moral sense, of conscience, and of imagination. It is most difficult to show how there ever should have been bred in men this tendency to live above material things, and live in the invisible realm. When you go back to the earliest periods, you see it efficiently working there. It was always known, more or less strong, among these sensuous creatures, with all the force and power of their animal propensities acting upon them. And it is now. But it is not, and has not been, the result of cultivation; for cultivation tends rather to destroy imagination than to increase it. It is as nearly native or natural as anything can well be conceived to be.

Children learn by the imagination. What is the imagination, but that constructive faculty by which we take invisible things, and make them as if they were visible to us? Ignorant people learn by the imagination. The religions of primitive people are filled with fables and creations of the imagination which, regarded from the scientific stand-point, are lies, but which, regarded from the imaginative stand-point are wonderful helps. They are myths; they are quasi truths; they are primitive verities.

The world has worked itself up to its present standing; and in the beginning, far back, not only in our childhood, but in the life of primitive nations—there was this bright faculty which is unlike anything that you could breed from surrounding circumstances—a faculty by which people have learned civilization. For I think it will be found that while morals, so called, have followed refinement, refinement has always been the product of the imagination—an imagination that lifted the ideals of things; an imagination that all the time painted in the invisible something better and yet so nearly allied to the visible that men went on to the higher state, aspired, had ambition. And to-day, if you look at large, you will find that men are in the active employment, in one and another way, of this same dominant tendency to sustain themselves in the grinding conflicts of the world by taking refuge in the unreal—that is to say, that which is real only by the constructive effort of their own imagination.

Not alone the maiden who spins by the wheel, and sings, and is

silent, and sings again, comforts herself with reverie. Those who are weary of the tasks of life retreat from them by reverie. Thousands who find no place to rest otherwise, often rest in reverie. It is a sort of waking dream, and is distinguished from constructive imagination rather by this: that it is left to run its own way, one thing being tacked on to another without ordinary cause and effect, by juxtaposition and accidental associations.

Though the habit of reverie may be carried to excess, and though men may be made too unpractical by it, the thing itself is a blessing. It is a bandage that no man should tear off from wounds over which oftentimes it is bound. It is the wings by which men lift themselves up above that which they cannot master nor meet. It is a beneficent dispensation by which we can retreat from things that we cannot endure, and live above them.

There are those who live in memory. Memory, though, as we live in it, has the constructive element, and is largely an effort of the imagination. It is very seldom that any person remembers things in their order. We trace them again and again. We reconstruct them. We recall, to be sure, the scenes of childhood; we live over voyages and travels in distant lands; we experience again things joyful and grievous; but it is always with something added, the imagination hovering over this exercise of memory. Multitudes of persons find this exercise a retreat into which they may run, and shut out, in the scenes which they recall from their childhood, the dismal storms of the present. How blessed and peaceful and virtuous and sweet childhood is! How blessed it is in parents to give this education to their children, and store them full of such sweet suggestions! For there is in their memory of experience so much that is bright and beautiful, that it becomes to them a portfolio of engravings, a gallery of pictures, a palace of many chambers; and it is a refuge into which, in later life, they may run and hide themselves from care and trouble.

Make your children as happy as you can; make their happiness as many-sided as possible; for remember that in them you are laying up treasures, opening up realms and regions where afterward this faculty will minister to their consolation.

Then there is a constructive tendency which is more overt, more obvious. We see among men a building, a weaving faculty. How many young men are there who have not built castles in the air? How many maidens are there who have not? How many young men are there who have not, at some time in their life, been orators, and imagined the audiences and the occasions? Some imagine the speeches—but that is generally the hardest part of it. How many

men have imagined themselves on the quarter-deck, commodores, or admirals, and gone through terrible fights! How many men have commanded armies! We are great generals, all of us, in peace times, and in imaginary scenes. How many men have, in imagination, gone into business, and made all fly and sparkle around about them! What wonderful enterprises have shot out of men's brains that never put anything into their pockets! How rich men have become in imagination! How many have, in their imagination, opened mines, and struck railways through mountains, and brought stores to the markets of the world! What ships men have built, what engines invented, what books written, what poems left, what scenes beheld, by the imagination! How many have traveled, and explored, and wandered amid fairy scenes such as Rasselas never found! What caves, and stalactites, and mines, and metals, and jewels and gems, have there been disclosed by the imagination!

Have you never flown in the air? I have, a thousand times. Have you never had wings? Then you do not know how good it feels. I have been upon tree-tops, and ridden upon clouds, softer than any cushion that man can imagine. I have flown above the storm, and looked down upon it. I have gone from mountain-top to mountain-top, and seen men below climbing with slow and measured mountaineer's step. I have been to the top of Mont Blanc and down again as quick as thought!

It is a blessed thing to have wings. You have them if you only knew it—not wings that can take up this poor trudging body, but wings which can take up the best part of it; which can take a man to the polar sea, where the year round the water chants its own anthem, and sings its own song; and which can take him southward to the tropics, where there is perpetual warmth and fragrance and beauty.

I have descended to the bottom of the sea, and walked among rocks, and seen the jewels in the skulls of dead men. There abound all around the world, and in nature—in this treasure-house, the globe—objects of wondrous interest and pleasure, if a man only has eyes to see and wings to fly withal.

Do you say that this is unprofitable? Then I should like to know how profitable *your* way of looking at things is! I have seen men eighty years of age who have gone through life digging, pulling, hauling, striving, contending, sweating, decaying, dying, and who were good for nothing at the end. And they were all the time talking about "these unprofitable imaginative men." What has practical life done for you who have been bearing burdens and toiling all your days? Are you any better off than your long-eared brethren? How many

I see working in life—practical men, gradgrinds—who despise the poetic tribe, the whole set of those who live in the realm of the imagination! But which is the better, he that goes through life doing no harm, doing the least possible mischief, and reaping as much enjoyment day by day as is consonant with good morals, or he that all his life long is attempting things which he never accomplishes, and is discontented all the way through, and dies in discontent?

Still, I do not advise you to take up imagination as a trade or profession. It is not meant to be meat and drink. It is medicine. It is cordial. It is solace. It is something to help you in the asperities and attritions of rude material life. It is the angel of God's presence that is constantly illuminating things, and making you see something higher and better. Wisely employed, it becomes a blessed retreat. Out of curmudgeon care, out of envious and splenetic moods, one may escape by a wise economy of the imagination.

Oh, how tired one becomes of winter! Are you not tired to-day of this everlasting March? Well, go with me, now, to the fairest of all hillsides—mine of course—and sit and smell with me the new-blown roses of next June. I can see them. I can see my trees full of blue birds and robins. And the sunshine—oh how bounteous and beautiful it is! How deep the blue ether is! And from the north I see those royal thrones and those white islands come floating through the heavens. I hear the rustle of the leaves in the trees, and I can almost by the sounds tell the different kinds of trees. Can you tell the difference between an organ and a piano by their sounds? and cannot I tell the difference between a pine and an elm, or between an elm and a maple, by the sounds of their leaves? No two have the same sounds. Listen with me to these things. Walk with me on the hill-side and watch the ten thousand gauzy creatures that go flying and buzzing and filling up the short space of their lives with the utmost activity.

There is no March to me. I have a cure for rude winter days in the imagined days of spring. I have a cure for rough and disagreeable spring days in the bright days of June which I see through my imagination. When all things are hard upon me, all the earth disports above and around me; and if only I can set myself free from the coarse materialism of the body, and take the wings of the imagination, I can fly away to scenes that are fairer and better than any that are real.

These are facts; and I suspect that those who deride the imagination are continually resorting to it. Where you use it along the line of reality; where you use it in the range of your nobler faculties—hope and love; where you use it so as to insphere the other life;

where you bring into it the reality of the All-Father ; where by it you raise up again the lost, that never were lost ; where by it you enter the fair abode which purified natures in heaven occupy, then it is *faith*. Faith is nothing but spiritualized imagination. That is to say, it is the picturing of invisible reality by the power of imagination. That which distinguishes it from ratiocination or a scientific process, is the imaginative element—the glowing, creating, artistic power—which God has given to every human soul. Not they are painters alone who paint on canvas. They who paint on the horizon above are artist painters. Not they alone are sculptors who can cut the solid marble, or shape the gold and ivory, but they who by the imagination can make noble creatures stand out populous in the heavenly land, touch them with the fire of life, and be with them in sympathy and affection.

Are all these powers given to man to be smothered in him, or only to creep sinuously along the line and level of the earth ? Great roads there are between here and the other life for great thoughts and great souls. The spaces between this world and heaven you can dart through as quick as the light comes from the sun, by the power of the imagination.

This is the power by which it is said that Moses was sustained. Practical man, factual man, he was ; but so wise a man was he that he knew how to dodge facts, and could take things as they were here, and could take things as he imagined them to be there. He lived as seeing things which were invisible. With society of a rebellious people, and all manner of trials and disappointments and heavy, wearing burdens, it was by the power of the imagination that he ministered to himself patience, and renewed his strength, and was enabled to endure to the end. A man who lives to be a hundred and twenty years of age, and is governor of such a people as the Israelites were, needs something more than this world can afford him.

The last visit I made in Washington was during the life of Edwin M. Stanton—the noblest of all the men who stood in the great struggle through which we came ; the foremost man ; the cleanest man through and through ; the wisest man ; the man who, when he had thunder of will, had divinity within him—one of the few creative natures. And with all these manly qualities he had a woman's heart, a child's tenderness, and an angelic fancy. The last time I was at his house, we spoke of public affairs. It was at that difficult time when we were striving with all our might to save a recreant President from going over to the wrong side, bearing all things, enduring all things, hoping all things, and believing pretty much

all things. The conversation soon ended on that subject. Then he went to his book-case and took down a book of poems and a book of literature (Arthur Helps was one of the authors), and sat down and began to talk with me on poetic themes, reading this, that, and the other passage. There was that great work of a million men going on; this man had in his hands those springs which touched every part of our vast land; oftentimes he was oppressed night and day beyond the measure of human endurance; and he retreated into his room and library, and went to the poets and sweet singers and noble men in literary life, and held commerce with them; and he was as one who comes from a bath. His soul was washed and refreshed by these musings and imaginings.

Was it not beautiful? Was it not natural? Had he not learned the art of living in the invisible?

I think he rose to higher musings than these. I believe, I know, from his own statements, that he lived as in the conscious presence of God, and that he derived his courage from the sense of the Divine power and presence. All the way up to the highest and sublimest heights of imaginative life he found refreshment. And so may you. So may all men.

The most glorious chamber, it seems to me, in the Lord's mansion, the human head, is oftentimes ignominiously locked up. Here are mirrors by which things are reflected; here are windows through which you can look out; here are hints by which you can build, and suggestions by which you can paint; and that part of the human soul which is sweetest and most restful—how often is it sacrificed because men think they must attend to duty, and that reality must take the precedence of imagination, and that factual truth is a great deal more important than any form of merely imaginative or conceptional truth!

As Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible—as God, in other words, constituted the center and ideal of his vision and reverie—so it should be in Christian life. So in Christian life I think it is. Our conception of God is an imaginary one. No man who has only a God of the letter has a God. To read what is said of Jehovah and Jesus in the Bible, and to be content simply with that literal statement, is not to believe and not to perceive. No person can be said to have a distinct conception of God who has not framed it out of some elements which are vital, living in him. Nobody has a God until he can say, “O God, thou art *my* God; I have made thee.” Man create God? Yes! The imaginary conception which must always be that which is God to us, we do frame. We take the materials out of the letter. It says that God is long-

suffering. We take our knowledge of long-suffering as one element, and begin to mold. It says that he is gracious, patient, abundant in goodness. We take these qualities in our imagination, and frame them into some picture in our mind. It says that he is loving, giving himself in love, and that he is just. We take what we know of these qualities and form them into a personality. And that is to us God. And every man who has a vivid, living conception of God has framed it himself out of what he knows of moral and social wants. He has prepared it by the power of the imagination. Whatever thought overhangs you, and fires your soul's enthusiasm of God; whatever vision brings tears to the eye, or tremulous experience to the heart, is something that has been fashioned by the ministration of your thoughts working upon invisible qualities, and shaping and holding up aloft a conception of God that is peculiar to you. We call it our father's God and our mother's God. We caress it with ten thousand phrases of excellence. But after all, the part which takes hold of you is that part which came from you. The materials are given us in the Word of God. Our experience of the qualities which are there represented is that which vitalizes them. We take these qualities, these excellencies of the divine nature, and frame them into a dignity, a majesty and a grandeur which to us make God. The vision which we have of him springs out from our own mind. So that, though we have in the Bible a revelation of the qualities which go to make the divine Being, there is a second revelation in us of the spirit of God through the imagination. And it is this second revelation which makes him vital and powerful to us. The filling up is our own. The materials are furnished; the outline is given; but the realization and the idealization are our own.

In the exercise of this power of the imagination one may so frame to himself an ideal of the divine kingdom that it shall become as real to him, substantially, as if it were visible, and far more influential. There is no limitation, there is almost no circumscription, of the power of the imagination in this direction. And the blessedness of it is far beyond the blessedness of the ordinary use of reason. Not that I would undervalue that, nor that I would undervalue practical wisdom and experience in human life. The two are joined together; but the higher is the imagination, through which we perceive unseen beings, and the unseen world. The reason is overhung by the imagination and is energized by it, and so is made more valuable than it can be in its barren, material, practical self.

Now, what is the effect, on the whole, of living in the continual use of the imaginative power, applying it to things above us and beyond us, in another life and in another sphere?

First, it enlarges the range of our own being. It brings us into sympathy with the universe. It has the power to conceive of things which are outside of ourselves and beyond ourselves, enlarging the circle, widening it, and leading to all manner of strange relations. It is this power which gives largeness to men's thoughts and conceptions.

The peasant thinks that his farm is the universe. By and by, perhaps, by a little travel, or by reading, he learns of the next market town. Then his idea of the size of the universe is greatly enlarged. Gradually his knowledge increases, and he takes in his own county. Now his idea of the magnitude of the universe is immensely expanded. By and by, perhaps, he becomes the servant of a man who goes to the war. Or, he travels in foreign countries. And he smiles in himself to think that he should have thought that his farm or his county comprised the whole world. Every year he widens the range of his familiarity with things. And when he comes back he is as much more than when he went out as his sympathy and imaginative power are more than mere practical, matter-of-fact knowledge. And at last he may become all-knowing so far as mundane affairs are concerned. Now if we only carry this same tendency higher and higher, not only do we couple ourselves with all men and with all ages of the world, but we have new possibilities. We rise and expand. We reach to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, and to the zenith, by this power of the imagination. We bring our souls into commerce, into personal relationship, with all sentient beings in heaven and upon the earth.

This use of a sanctified imagination—spiritualized imagination, rather (this word *sanctified* has been trod on so much, its meaning has been so perverted, that it does little good to use it)—this spiritualized imagination helps, in practical affairs, to bring up the higher parts of our mind, by putting them into relations with the whole divine scheme. The trouble with men is, that they see themselves only in connection with their daily drudgeries; that they do not see themselves in the relations which they sustain.

It must be a very barren life that is occupied with sticking pins on a paper. Or, as it takes some twenty men to make a pin, what a philosopher he must be who has nothing to do but to put heads on pins! If a man puts heads on pins for forty years, how largely his mind must be educated by his work! And those who hold the points of pins to sharpen them, for forty years—what a school of manhood they go through! And men whose business it is to clean the sewers of New York—I do not wonder that they neglect it; but suppose they were

faithful and attended to it, what sort of a life would they lead? Night scavengers—what sort of a life is theirs? And day scavengers—boys that go around after swill—what is their thought of men and of families, who see nothing but the fragments that come out in pails; who take that which is left from the most piggish side of men, to carry home to pigs? Men who sweep the streets; men who do the menial services of life, and have nothing else to do, and nothing else to think about—do you wonder that they are gross and coarse? And if they go to a drinking-house; or if they go home to rouse up the animal that is in them; if they go home to quarrel with their companions; if they go home to fill their maw and tumble into the corner on a heap of dirty straw, only to get up again to perform these lowest and most disagreeable offices of human life, I do not wonder at it.

Think of servants in dissecting rooms, who have to bring in dead bodies, and carry them out again in morsels and fragments all their life. Think how full society is of just such workingmen! If you go through New York, you walk over the heads of a thousand men. If you walk up Broadway, down in damp cellars, under your feet, and in dusty and cobwebbed attics over your head, are human beings who stay there month in and month out working for their pitiful remunerations. When I think what, in these crowded cities, the actual life is, I say to myself, "If those poor creatures have no skylights, I pity them. If they can think of nothing but what they have to do; if while their hands are busy their mind is busy with the same things, what a bondage theirs must be!"

But, thank God, there is not one of them that cannot, while he is working, by his imagination carry his works out in its relations to benevolence and love and kindness in society. There is not one of them who cannot take hold of his own being while doing his routine work. The man who shoes horses' hoofs may himself be walking the golden pavement. I have seen those who soared in angelic realms while their hands were stained in the colors of the vat. No matter how low a man's work is, no matter how poorly he is remunerated, though he has never seen the sun, though he was born, and has always lived, in the mine, or though it be his lot to delve and work in the sea, it is in his power to be a son of God. For him, too, there is a crown. For him, too, there are songs. He has brothers, and he has sisters, and he has a God of glory.

What man is so poor that he does not have an undivided interest in the sun? You walk along the street. You do not own that house, or that, or that. You do not own any house, most of you. You have no money in that bank. You cannot draw a check and

have it honored in any bank, most of you. And stocks you do not own. You have no part nor lot in any of these things which men are praised for having.

But who owns the flocks of birds that are coming up north now, and that are singing already in the fields? Anybody who has ears to hear and eyes to see, owns them. Those spring days that are coming, and bringing balm and sweet moisture from the south—who owns them? You own them, and I own them. When the raggedest beggar that walks the street with head uncovered and hair unkempt, lifts himself into the air, it is his air. And the sun is his. And the summer is his. The morning and the evening are for him. God makes the curtains around about his bed; for he is God's child. He is not so rich in that which men call riches as that old curmudgeon and miser; but oh, how rich he is overhead!

There is a great class of toilers who have no tapestry, no pictures, very little physical comfort in life. There are men who labor with their hands for their daily bread, and feel that part of the Lord's Prayer which you jump over with so little thought—"Give us this day our daily bread." To you who have twenty barrels of flour in your house, that does not mean anything. But there are many men who have eaten their last morsel of bread, and who have to engineer for the next mouthful. There are men who in the morning pray in earnest, "Give us this day—*this* day—our daily bread!"

But these men are not cabined and confined to base materialities. They spring up above them to this upper arch, this all-glowing, all-beneficent constitution of things. They have wings, and they fly up into the realm of things invisible, and there live, or may do so. They endure as seeing Him who is invisible. How easy it is for us to retreat out of our cares, out of the sick-room, out of the house of death, into this great upper realm.

Greenwood has a most elastic and bounding surface, to me. I never have a thought that strikes there which does not bound as high as heaven. Do you suppose that when I look upon the graves I see the graves alone? I see a pearly gate that opens through and through. I see something that is beyond. I see the invisible. Do you suppose that when I see that most impressive of all regiments that ever were marshaled to the music of death—the regiment of little children that lie in rows there—that I simply see those little mounds? I see fathers and mothers and nurses who were so poor that they had nothing to erect over their darling children, and who brought out little lambs and all manner of playthings and laid them upon their graves. But these memorials of what love has done are by no means all that I see. I see the households to which

the children belonged. Up from these graves spring visions of careful hands that laid these little ones to rest. I look above and see them clothed in robes—in white raiment. I see them, brighter than birds, flying through the upper land. I rise above the things that are visible by the power of imagination, into the realm of the invisible, and dwell in the higher ether with them.

Why do you not rise above your cares? Why do you stay where you are wrought upon by the attritions of life? Why do you not go and walk in the gardens alone? Why do you not accept the offer of Him who said, "Cast your care upon me, for I care for you"? Why do you not go where you will live in his presence, and behold his brow, and feel his touch? Why do you not go where you shall rest in his bosom, and realize his compassion, and be sustained by his strength? Why do you not go and fill again and again the urn of your waning power from the power of the eternal God, from which we all sprang? Why do you not renew your better self at the fountain of divine love? Why do you not, when weighed down by the trials and disappointments which invest you here below, take refuge in the invisible realm, until you are able to come back again to your labor and your drudgery, clad in the garments of consolation, soothed by the cordial of the soul, and bringing with you thoughts supernal, angelic, divine, which shall be more to you than silver, or gold, or counsel, or sympathy, or friend, or lover?

Our riches are not made up of material things.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Our riches lie above. The eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath laid up for those who love. But, God be thanked, we come to the border of them. By this divine power, this yearning aspiration, this quickened imagination, this devout faith, we enter into heaven, we walk its streets, and with the blessed throng its temples, and come back stronger, more patient, more gentle, more loving, purer-hearted, less discouraged, to our work, to our suffering, to everything that God's will has prescribed for us; waiting for the day to dawn when we shall no longer see God through the imagination, through a glass, darkly, but face to face,—and shall know even as also we are known.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

We thank thee, our Father, that in the greatness of the way we need not be lost, wandering without sight of things invisible. Groping at mid-day, we need not miss the path; for thou art our Guide. Thou knowest how to speak to the consciousness and to the understanding; and those who are afar off are brought near by thy sweet influence. We thank thee that though thou dost not disclose thyself to us; though we cannot take thee in by the eye, nor by the measure of our thought, yet we are growing toward thee, and are coming to the day of disclosure when we shall see thee as thou art—when we shall be like thee that we may see thee and understand thee.

We rejoice that we have some symbols given us by the way. We rejoice that thou hast been pleased to call thyself our Father, and that we have some secret knowledge and interpretation of thy relations to us. We rejoice that in the household we are brought into such relations to our little children that there grows up in us some thought of God that is higher and better than that which comes to us from nature without—love, and patience therein; the sacrifice of love; wisdom given from those who have it to those who have it not; the transfer of experience. We thank thee that we are able to fold our children, as it were, in our own lives, and clothe them there, and bring them up to the threshold of their own independent life, by the virtue which is in us. So, dimly, we discern something of the glory and the mystery of thine own nature—of thy care-taking. And we rejoice that we may believe that this is but a spark, and that the great orb and glory of the fact is in thee undiscernible until we rise into thy presence. Then how wonderful will be the disclosure! How little do we understand here the nature of divine love and beneficence, or what it can work in a higher sphere!

We pray, O Lord our God, that we may learn more and more of thee by becoming more and more like unto thee. Fill all our households with thy presence. Refine our affections toward each other. Make us Christ-like and heavenly-minded, that through our own experience we may discern something more of the divine life and of the blessedness of the other state.

Be pleased to bless the parents who have brought their children this morning into the midst of their brethren, and sanctified their desire to consecrate them to Christ. May they rear them in the spirit of love. May they be able to create around about them such a life and such households that these children shall early discern the spirit of the heavenly land. May the lives and health of these little ones be precious in thy sight. And remember, we pray thee, all those who have been consecrated in baptism, and all those who have been consecrated in the closet by the prayers of faithful parents. May the young that are growing up be more manly than we have been before them. May they have more zeal and courage, and discern more clearly, both by our mistakes and our successes, the better way. We pray for the young, that they may be shielded from temptation, that they may be valiant and noble in good, and that they may live for their country, for their fellow-men, for their households, and for themselves as the children of God. Grant that the life which is to come may evermore shine down upon the life which now is; and lead them with higher and sweeter aspirations from strength to strength until they shall stand in Zion and before God.

We pray that thou wilt command thy blessing to rest upon all the families of this flock. If thou hast darkened any, and brought sorrow and grief unto any, come thou, thyself, and interpret thine own work to them. Come

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\* Immediately following the baptism of children.

THE SERMONS  
OF  
HENRY WARD BEECHER,  
IN  
*Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.*

FROM VERBATIM REPORTS BY T. J. ELLINWOOD.

“PLYMOUTH PULPIT,”  
SEVENTH SERIES:

SEPTEMBER, 1871—MARCH, 1872.



NEW-YORK:  
J. B. FORD & COMPANY.  
1872.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872,

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thou, O Spirit of consolation, that where darkness is, there thy light may shine.

Be with all who are in perplexity, or who are carrying burdens or cares that they cannot throw away or endure. Thou canst give them power to endure. When the thorn shall not be removed, thy grace can be made sufficient to bear it.

We pray for the tempted, that they may rise up against temptation, and watch against insidious and easily besetting sins. We pray for all who are in any trouble, that they may seek relief in thee.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt hear our prayer, not only for the families of this household who are with us, but for all who are upon the sea or in distant lands. We pray for all the members of this church and congregation who are wayfarers anywhere. Gather them, as we do, yet more abundantly and gloriously, in thy thoughts to-day.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all who shall worship in this our tabernacle—strangers among us; those who have been wanderers; those who have come back again after long absences; those who come with hearts of thanksgiving and rejoicing. Will the Lord meet them with a portion this morning.

Bless all the churches of this city, and of the great city near us, and throughout our land. Revive thy work in their midst. We thank thee that thou art showing the marvels of thy power, and that multitudes of men are being gathered from the service of sin and the flesh to the service of God. May their number be increased.

Wilt thou cleanse this great land by the power of the Spirit. Wilt thou give us wise rulers, upright magistrates, and administrations that are less and less corrupt, until they become a moral power.

We pray that thy kingdom may come among all the nations of the earth. See the scattered poor. Look among the waste places. Behold the darkness, thou that dwellest in light. And let the word of power go forth, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask these things, not because we are worthy, but in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

---

#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, how far off thou art! Our words go sounding out, and seem to die in vacuity. We reach up our hands, and nothing touches them. It is very dark, often, and no light dawns. We call, and are as little children lost in the wilderness. Yet thou art; and thou art found of those who diligently seek thee. Thou hast thine hours of appearing. There are dawnings of light. There is the grace of the Spirit around about us to help us. There are those upliftings of our own soul by which we are able to discern the Invisible, and take hold of the Spirit-land, and participate somewhat in its strength and joy. We pray that thou wilt grant to every one of us such a constant indwelling of thy Spirit that the window which opens toward heaven may never be shut. May we, from day to day, look out upon its fair fields, its sweet scenes, and all that is laid up there for those who love God, and be more content with our lot, more faithful in the discharge of our

duties, more earnest one with another, more patient with each others' faults, and more forgetful of each other's sins. We pray that thou wilt grant that this other and better and higher sight, this faith, may be so strong in us that we shall be able to say that we do live by faith, and not by sight. And bring us at length where faith shall minister to sight, and sight shall be as faith, in thine own immediate presence. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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